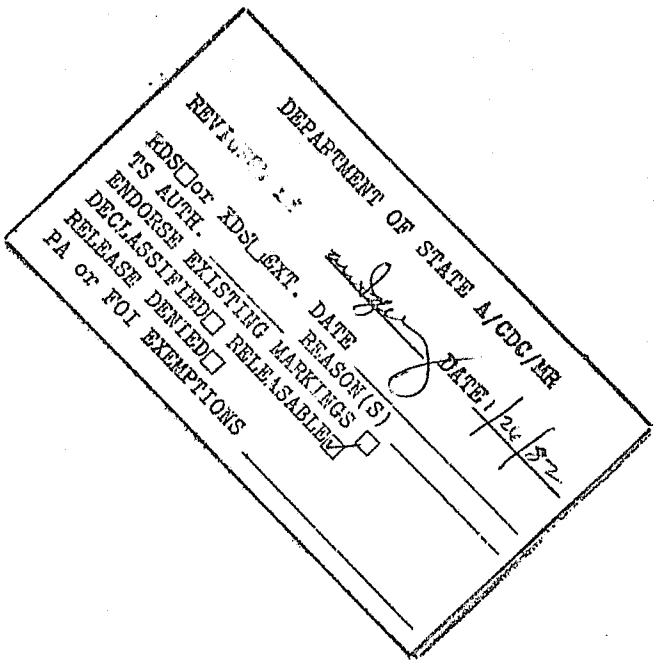
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and one from Dinh Tuong Province in the Delta, Nguyen Ba Can. Buu had been worried that they might lose. As a price for his sweeping victory in Dinh Tuong, though, Can had to follow the Province Chief's advice to abstain from campaigning in the city of My Tho for Truong Van So from the CVT.

6. Most Cong Nong candidates went through an agonizing dilemma in their campaigns, according to Buu. They were not "opposition" candidates, and so they did not take an anti-Thieu line that would have won them many votes. On the other hand, they were not "government" candidates either, and so did not benefit from either the overt or covert GVN support that guaranteed victory to others.

7. Some did have establishment support, of course. One was Mrs. Nguyen Thi Hai, a wealthy pharmaceutical manufacturer and a close friend of President Thieu's wife, who topped the list in Long An province. Buu conceded that Mrs. Hai might not be "very close" to the Cong Nong Party as a Lower House Deputy.

8. How many Cong Nong winners would stick together as a bloc in the Lower House? Buu said he hoped to have a solid group of "about 15" who would join forces with 15 other deputies to exercise real leverage in the 159-deputy Lower House.

9. Would this be a pro-Thieu bloc? Buu frowned. His original plan was to get Thieu's strong support for a pro-administration Cong Nong list, but he got only lukewarm support in some cases, and either neutrality or open opposition from Thieu's people in most other cases, Buu said. So the Cong Nong deputies would not be in Thieu's hip pocket.

10. Showing signs of fatigue, Buu sank back into his chair. In this room, part of his living quarters at the CVT, he had spent long hours each day over the past three or four months talking up the Cong Nong Party. Of late, he almost never went to his office nearby in the CVT headquarters. Without withdrawing from union matters completely, he had been neglecting his CVT activities. He wondered whether the 17 winners were worth all the effort.

11. Once again Buu scanned the list of 72 Cong Nong candidates. "A lot of good men lost," he murmured. He named a few: So from My Tho, a former rubber plantation worker and current Province Council Chairman named Doan Van Giap in Binh Long Province, and Vuong Van Binh, president of the Transport Workers Federation, who ran in Phuoc Tuy.

12. Maybe that was all the Party could expect, though, in its first real campaign test, Buu reflected. "A semi-defeat. No--a semi-victory."

BUNKER